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The Power Of E-mail Marketing

Email can be your company's secret weapon or it can end up biting you in the back side if it's seen as junk email or spam. We have seen companies make deadly email mistakes, like listing their entire customers in the "cc" line or flooding recipients in boxes with many copies of the same message. But other companies get good results from email marketing.

Email marketing is a powerful marketing tool and is incredibly easy and most effective when it is simple. However email marketing does not work well for a one time quick-hit marketing strategy. Its increased flexibility gives companies the ability to create and test multiple campaigns.

It's cheap- only a few cents per recipient-compared to a printed piece that may be costly and require postage. Campaigns can be quickly developed and arrive in a recipient's mailbox the same day, versus 3-10 days for "snail mail". By establishing a few best practices a company can avoid being labeled a "spammer" and ensure the success of email marketing campaigns.

Obtain consent whether implied or expressed, before sending an email. Implied consent signifies a pre-existing business relationship with the recipient. With expressed consent, the recipient. "opts-in" or gives you permission to send them an email. Whether it's by checking a box on your website when registering or returning a postcard that was attached to a newsletter its imperative that you obtain the recipient's permission first.

Always give recipients a way to unsubscribe or "opt-out" of future communications. It is common courtesy; it's also a requirement under the International Spam Act. Two of the most common "opt-out" methods are a link in the email to a form on the company's website or an e-mail address where recipients can send a request to be removed from the mailing list. Due to the large number of emails containing false or misleading subject and "from" lines, you should clearly identify yourself and the purpose of the message. In addition, email marketers must include a valid domain name or URL and a physical postal address in all emails.

Getting people to read your message is key to successful email marketing. People today are bombarded with numerous e-mails and sorting through them can be arduous. One of the best ways to emphasize your message is to personalize it. This can be done simply by for example, addressing the recipient by name in the e-mail.

Any good marketing campaign generates action from the recipient. This could include clicking out to a website for more information, linking to an online coupon, or the opportunity to enter a contest. Encouraging participation not only increase exposure and

potential opportunity for your company but also gives you better tracking information. Track everything: click through rates bounce rates and most importantly conversion rates, where you've successfully converted recipients into customers. Tracking activities will help a company evaluate if campaigns are successful or not.

Distance yourself from spammers. Put your name or your company's name in the 'From' line, not 'Here it is' or 'pw169@hotmail.com'. Sign your email with a real person you want to receive it not to 'undisclosed recipients'.

Always write compelling copy. Make the email short and sweet so that it can be scanned easily. Make good use of links including one to your privacy policy page (you must have one) where you reassure subscribers you won't share their details with third parties.

Test, test, test! Test the offer the 'Subject' line, the 'From' line, the message copy, the layout, the message length, the timing and the contact frequency.

Email marketing is about relationship building and not quick revenue hits. Customer relationship are profitable when they are long term.